

The Foundry, Port Talbot.



Early 1990s Triumph brochures were wonderful things, featuring seriously quirky and carefully staged set-piece photographs of the machines. The Tiger featured man on safari, for example. The Speed Triple imagery varied from heavy metal (featuring a foundry) and ferocious dog (featuring a ferocious dog). Then Triumph discovered the cd-rom and things went downhill from there

It is disappointingly easy to get service items for the modular Triumph range and Speed Triples are well catered for. Standard exhaust silencers are, however, becoming harder to get hold of, but the downpipes, being made from stainless steel, seem to last forever; unlike the black chrome finish which often disappoints. The test machine has had the downpipes polished and very nice they look, too. Many other body and frame parts are interchangeable, but the unique seat cowls now change hands at prices which lead you to assume they must be made from platinum, not plastic. There are no fairing panels to replace, of course and most service tasks are easily carried out, although 18 screws in the airbox plus complete carb removal is a little tedious at air filter change time. The special fork tool required to replace the regularly popping fork oil seals is enough to dissuade some from potential ownership, further enhancing the classic status in future. There's just about enough scarcity of original parts to allow it to scrape through this section. Pass, B-

#8: Green-eyed appeal

Classic motorcycles should be things of beauty, powerful, class-leading, trend-setting, rare, expensive, exotic, or any combination of these. Words such as economical, reliable, plentiful and practical should not apply to your up and coming classic. When you attend your local gathering your machine should be standard enough for the onlooker to immediately recall where they first saw one. Then, on imagining themselves astride your bike, they should be ever so slightly covetous. After all, they are the potential next owner...

The Speed Triple, finished in the iconic black paintwork, with black engine, wheels and tyres,

manages to look exotic and slightly menacing. It enjoys a reputation for naked performance and is remembered as being the model that created the streetfighter genre. It offers tremendous kerbside appeal as it remains as one of the few high performance yet unfaired motorcycles on the street. There are few bikes from the 1990s that look cooler. Pass, A+

#9: The name

It is always preferable for your underappreciated machine to actually have a name. It's no coincidence that Dominator, Commando, Red Hunter, Speed Twin are all bone-fide classics, whereas B100, DR650, VFR750, etc lag behind, somewhat. There are NO circumstances where a bike which includes 'Classic' as part of the title will ever be considered as such; Bonneville Classic or Electra Glide Ultra Classic are simply cases of trying too hard.

The example considered here is made by Triumph, one of the undisputed Grand Marques in motorcycling history. It also shamelessly plunders the firm's history by evoking the iconic Speed Twin appellation and giving it just a tiny tweak. Very clever. Pass, A+

#10: Colour

Future classic bikes should ideally be a single colour, preferably black. For instant karma they may also be orange. Multi colours should be avoided, unless purchasing a Jackson Pollock or Mondrian.

The Speed Triple is overwhelmingly black, seemingly absorbing light from its surroundings, like a black hole. It was also available in a volcanic metallic orange for the enlightened rider. Pass, A++

